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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5461
INFO RUEHB/S/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE 3469
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE 4514
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 1113
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0399
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 0375
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0422
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 4100
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 2030
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0150

UNCLAS NICOSIA 000116

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [KSCA](#) [TBIO](#) [KSTH](#) [WHO](#) [AMED](#)

CASC, PREL, CY

SUBJECT: CYPRUS: H5N1 CONFIRMED IN A CHICKEN AND A TURKEY
IN NORTH

REFS: (A) NICOSIA 76 (B) NICOSIA 74 (C) NICOSIA 50 (D)
NICOSIA 34 (E) 05 NICOSIA 1914 (F) 05 NICOSIA 1866 (G) 05
NICOSIA 1836 (H) 05 NICOSIA 1740 (I) 05 NICOSIA 1676 (J)
05 NICOSIA 1591 (K) 05 NICOSIA 1488

¶1. (SBU) On January 29, the EU reference laboratory at Weybridge in the UK confirmed the presence of the H5N1 virus in two samples of chicken and turkey found in the Turkish Cypriot administered area of Cyprus (ref A). Two European Commission veterinary experts arrived late January 29 for a three-day visit to provide advice and assistance to the Turkish Cypriot authorities. At the invitation of the USAID-financed, UNDP-administered ACT program, a WHO health official will meet with both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot veterinary and health experts on February 1, the first time health authorities from both sides will have direct contact. There have been no other confirmed cases of H5N1 on Cyprus, either in poultry or humans. A Greek Cypriot woman, who had recently returned from Turkey, checked into a hospital in the south with flu-like symptoms. Tests for AI, however, were negative.

¶2. (SBU) The two birds were discovered on January 12, in the small village of Incirili (Maykrasykas in Greek) in eastern Cyprus and just north of the UK Sovereign Base Area (SBA) of Dhekelia (and approximately 20 kms west of Famagusta). Turkish Cypriot veterinary authorities sent samples for testing to Turkey on January 19 (the samples did not arrive in Weybridge until January 27). When preliminary tests came back positive for an undetermined strain of AI on January 23, Turkish Cypriot authorities culled all poultry in Incirili (Maykrasykas) and treated the village with disinfectant (ref A). According to the head of the Turkish Cypriot veterinary service, Ersan Korudag, experts have destroyed and buried 1,200 birds from 51 homes.

¶3. (SBU) According to Korudag, extra precautions had been extended to all villages under Turkish Cypriot control within 10 kms of Incirili. These include Duzce (Athna or Akhna in Greece), Bayarmudu (Pergamos), Turkmenkoy (Kondea), Cayonu (Kalopsidha), Korpulu (Kouklia) and Akdogan (Lysi) as well as one small egg farm and one small chicken farm. These measures included banning

poultry from entering or leaving, applying disinfectant, and strict enforcement of the rule that all poultry must be confined in pens or indoors to prevent interaction with migratory birds.

¶4. (SBU) A significant part of the 10km zone around Incrili falls in the UK Eastern Sovereign Base Area (SBA) of Dhekalia. SBA officials told us January 29 that they were working closely with the GoC Veterinary authorities and were waiting on further GoC guidance on additional steps to take. They had imposed the GoC practice of treating all vehicles crossing into the base from the north with disinfectant. Late January 29, the USAID-funded, UNDP-administered ACT program hosted a meeting between the EU experts and the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot veterinary experts as well as representatives from the UK SBA and UNFICYP (responsible for the buffer zone). It is technically possible that the 3 and 10 km zones around a potential AI breakout could simultaneously include territory administered by all four of these parties.

¶5. (SBU) A contact at the Presidential Administration confirmed to us that the GoC has no plans at this point to close down the checkpoints connecting the two communities. Local DG Enlargement representative Andrea Batista stressed to us that under the EU's Green Line Regulation the GoC can only shut the checkpoints with the EU's approval. Specifically Article 10 of Green Line Regulation reads: "Any change in the policy of the government of the RoC on crossings of goods or persons shall only become effective after the proposed changes have been notified to the Commission and the Commission had not objected to these changes within one month."

Article 11 (4) allows for emergency actions regarding risks to public and animal health but states that the "Commission may in consultation with the Government of the RoC apply forthwith such measures as are strictly necessary to remedy the situation," making the Commission rather than the GoC the primary actor.

SCHLICHER